INTVU MRS. KING! FOR BOOK

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Coretta King leads tribute to slain leader

By Francesca Drane
NEWS WORLD STAFF

She sat quietly as a choir sang her husband's praises. Occasionally a smile would cross her face as memories flew by. But when the choir sang his favorite song "Precious Lord," she shut her eyes, fighting back the years.

For almost a decade she has continued to carry his message of love, peace and unity and now she sits as a UN delegate as a result of his fight for civil rights.

She is the courageous Coretta Scott King, wife of the slain civil rights martyr Martin Luther King Jr. Yesterday she joined hundreds of New Yorkers and UN officials for a special tribute meditation service for "Martin Luther King: Humanity's Aspiration-Hero."

"Martin Luther King was a 20th-Century prophet," Mrs. King proclaimed. "He was first of all a spiritual leader and the movement he led in the South was essentially a spiritual movement. It was based on the love ethic and it has been said that love is the most powerful force in all the world.

"Martin understood that the two most durable values in the universe are truth and love.

"Out of slavery and suffering, black people learned how to survive—it was through their religious faith. And that same spirit was the force that black people embraced in the struggle for civil rights."

Mrs. King said that the "most moving experience since the civil rights movement of the 60's" was at the International Women's Conference in Houston last week.

"I believe the women's movement has reached a new stage of maturity. No one can change what is etched on the heart of those women. With solidarity and sisterhood, understanding and compassion, together we can work for our own liberation and the liberation of all mankind."

Ms. King said the civil rights movement was foremost a human rights movement. "Martin understood that we can't separate international relations and peace from what happens inside America's ghettos."

Addressing the problems of unemployment, Mrs. King said, "The President for the first time has endorsed a bill, a piece of legislation, that is far reaching—the Humphrey-Hawkins Bill. It is a good bill, contrary to what we may have read."

Mrs. King also expressed hope that Congress would pass legislation making January 15, King's birthday, "the first holiday honoring a black man in this country. It will say a great deal about whether America believes in her preachments; and I believe the legislation will be passed.

"Martin lives—his spirit lives here at the UN. He often said 'through strengthening the UN we can solve the problems,' and since I have been here I have seen a lot of hope, with Andy here giving leadership.

"I lost my husband. But I have never felt any bitterness. I have always felt there are people of good will in the world. We could not have won our struggle without the 10 percent of the people of good will working."

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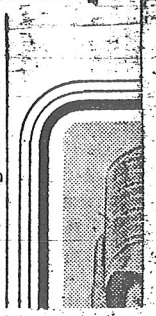
King church to be landmark

MONTGOMERY, Ala. (AP) —The National Park Service plans to designate the Dexter Avenue Baptist Church, where the late Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. once was pastor, as a National Historic Landmark on Dec. 11.

While King was pastor of the church—from 1954 to 1959—he led a boycott by blacks of the city's then-segregated bus system. His role in the boycott propelled him to national prominence as a civil rights leader.